1:Sanders 2-5,f (1952-1959) 1962 EH1 Greece EH1

[The City Greek]

Athenians know more about the French Riviera than the rural regions of their own country, and others of them live so entirely in an urban world that they take the Greek villager for granted, which in many ways is worse than ignoring him.[9] Yet such city Greeks, once this attitude is pointed out to them, are the first to admit their ignorance and to start another discussion on the novel subject of the Greek village, from which so many of them derive.

But there are somber shades as well to the sparkle and dash of Greek wit. To persuade many of the Greek officials to move from talk to action would have its difficulties and would prove particularly frustrating to an American or Britisher who had a special job to complete in a given period of time. It is also probably true that, given the present state of the Greek economy, almost any official is more interested in holding his job than in pressing toward real accomplishment if this might antagonize those above or below him in the bureaucratic hierarchy. Some of these officials, native sons of the village and not yet sure of themselves in the urban environment, spend disproportionate amounts of time in mending their political fences or in sitting on them, a pose easy for many Greeks to assume while rationalizing their problems away.

The qualities of city Greeks which have been mentioned here — self-confidence, intellectual curiosity, philosophizing a problem away, preoccupation with maintaining and improving one's position, and an awareness of a great cultural tradition — are endearing to some while irritating to others.[10] The urban Greeks who seem best to embody the heritage from the past and to approach with sincerity their problems of today are those who have taken time to know both the city and village Greece of the 1960's. Sharing the difficulties faced by their neighbors in the city, they also understand the grave readjustments occurring in the countryside.

The Island and Seafaring Greeks

The tradition of the city, ancient but still tremendously significant today, has mingled with the equally ancient traditions of the sea in the formation of modern Greece. Odysseus still lives in the Aegean and Ionian Islands today, not only in the resourcefulness with which he approached his problems but in the extent of his voyages. The seafarers are primarily the islanders, and Greece has many islands.[11] Although the sea, never more than eighty-odd miles distant from any point in Greece, has an indirect influence on the horizons of all Greeks, it is the direct source of livelihood to many islanders. Whether as fishermen or merchant seamen, they must study its moods in the same way that the city merchant studies the market or the peasant the condition of the soil. The seamen become so cosmopolitan through their voyages that they feel at home in many port towns with people speaking many languages. This at-homeness in the world extends to

1:Sanders Z-5,4 (1952-1959) 1962 EH1 Greece EH1

them now and begin to live in their homes. But within a few years they would be strong enough to come down and take all their former fields away from us. Where would we be then? No, we'll get along as best we can."

This story, as did those gathered from many later visits to numerous villages, illustrates the economic distinctions between the mountain and the plains villages. Life in the uplands is more self-subsistent, if for no other reason than the difficulty of getting crops such as figs and apricots to market. Cash crops figure much less prominently. But in spite of the economic disadvantages of the mountain villages, many of their people understand their common cause with the people of the plains.

A group of social-work students at Pierce College near Athens was asked to distinguish between the plains and mountain villages. Since these students came from villages in every region of Greece, the list of characteristics they prepared is of some value in indicating what village people think the distinctions are:

Mountain villagers	*Plains villagers*
Change slowly	Accept change, adapt better
Physically tough	Refined in manners
More hospitable	More sophisticated
Stubborn	Cunning
Happier, more optimistic	Sad (Thessaly)
Have deeper thoughts	
More intermarriage of kin	

An additional observation made by a successful Athens businessman, who was born in a mountain village, highlighted some of the advantages that the plains village has over the place from which he came: "For instance, water has been brought close to the houses in the plains so the people don't have to carry it so far; electricity has come in; new means of communication enable them to travel around; those teaching new methods of agriculture can visit to tell them what to plant and when to plant it."

Despite their isolation, the mountain people are considered by many Greeks to be brighter and more active than those of the plains. Indeed, many mountain villages are thought to have been settled by the more liberal, strongly independent inhabitants of the plain who could not support the indignities of Ottoman rule. According to one commandant of police, they are also less law-abiding. Although many of their young people habitually and successfully migrated elsewhere, most of the mountain people were contented with their simple life until the Communist guerrilla war of the 1940s made them vacate their homes for a temporary stay in market towns or cities on the plains. In spite of this exposure to easier ways, the mountain villagers still are believed to have greater fortitude and a willingness to put up with stark conditions, not simply from resigna-

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tion but because they take pride in making the best of what they have. Most of the meager sums of money they do have are probably sent in from a son who has a job outside the mountains. Government programs of supplying food are also periodically necessary to support these hardy people.

There are two historical factors accounting for the hardiness assigned to the mountain people over the plains dwellers. Before independence, the plainsmen, particularly in Thessaly and Macedonia, were attached to the estates of absentee Turkish landlords and, according to travelers' accounts, lived in tenancy approaching serfdom, despised by the more independent Greeks of the mountains. Further, the plains villagers suffered for centuries from the terrible malaria of the lowlands; drained of vitality, they were probably actually poorer physical specimens than the peasants of the more healthy uplands.

As various features of the peasant's life unfold, particularly in a later discussion of village ways, we can understand even better the differences between the peoples of the mountains and the plains. Nevertheless, we should not forget that as villagers the two groups hold much in common, such as their shared loyalty to their village and their tendency to be distrustful of the "outside world," particularly of the central-government officials in Athens.

The Sea

If mountains and plains are disappointing in the resources they contribute to Greece, then surely, one would think, the sea would more than compensate by providing fish in abundance. As a matter of fact, fish are an important source of protein in the Greek diet, but before the Second World War less than half of the total amount of fish eaten (35,000 to 40,000 metric tons) was caught by Greek fishermen in Greek seas. The rest had to be bought from abroad, often from neighboring countries, out of the country's meager store of foreign exchange.[14] Students of the problem seem to believe that the sea around Greece is rich in fish and that the trouble lies in the failure of the authorities to promote and foster a fishing industry. The many fishing boats destroyed during the war are being replaced, though slowly.

The merchant marine of Greece has been through the years a source of national pride. Here is one way the sea has been put to good advantage. Before World War II Greek ships totaled 1,900,000 tons and included 500 ocean-going vessels and a coastal and Mediterranean fleet of 55 large ships and 733 caiques, or small sailing boats. In 1946 there remained 138 miscellaneous ships totaling 501,000 tons. The sale of 100 liberty ships by the United States government to Greek operators at one fourth of the original cost contributed much to the rebuilding of the Greek merchant marine.

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marine. As of November 1957, the Greek merchant fleet numbered 541 vessels, whose tonnage totaled 1,510,535 tons. By 1961 its 1,110 ships amounted to 5,893,652 tons.

In addition to being a potential economic asset, the sea makes its influence felt in a psychological sense. "The Romans built roads but the Greeks always used the sea" was an observation made to me by a retired Greek admiral. The more one thinks about this simple statement of difference between two great nations of antiquity, the clearer become the varied bases for their greatness. Rome, the conqueror of the European continent and much of the Mediterranean world, held on to her territorial conquests for centuries, but the lasting conquests of ancient Greece were not those of territory, which she also conquered from time to time, but the victory of a superior culture. The Romans were administrators of subject lands; the Greeks became traders and merchants who colonized along the coasts of the whole known world, accumulated their wealth in cities, and maintained a competitive individualism much in evidence even today.

From this tradition of the sea the Greek has gained an outward look, sometimes carried to extremes. "He knows about every country but his own" commented a Westerner who had spent many years in Greece.

An old, old peasant put the way he felt toward the sea and what it meant to him in these words:

> "Look over the sea," he said, pointing to the shining water in the distance. "Do you know anything farther than that? Going over the sea means going over to America. In the olden days, under the pressure of need, one stole from the other and the other fought back and killed and so got out of the country. Only the great thieves and the peasants were left. For us village people, 'farther than the sea' means not just emigrating but also means bringing in. We can use it to improve life. Here near our village we have a waterfall and big water supply; we can have electricity and irrigation but we need scientists from across the sea to tell us how to use what we have. Then more people can live on the land and will not need to emigrate."

There are many Greeks, especially women, in isolated villages who have never seen the sea. Even for them it seems to have a deep emotional meaning, for, as one Greek folklorist explained to me, there is an unconscious worship of water all over Greece. A twenty-one-year-old peasant girl on her way to relatives in Athens rode with us from her village in the heart of the Peloponnesos. This was her first trip away from home. We stopped on the brow of a mountain while she had her first view of the sea. She who had ridden with us for many miles, shy and silent, looked out to the wide indigo horizon and cried, "Thalassa! thalassa!" (The sea! the sea!), and then subsided, wide-eyed. It was obvious to all of us that she was deeply

1:Sanders Z-5,1 (1952-1959) 1962 EH1 Greece EH1
Peloponnese:
[Shepherds]

239 to 500 before the war. Rent is usually paid in milk, in an amount equaling
427 the grain needed to seed the field pastured. If it takes normally 500 okes
246 of seed (23.5 bushels) to put in the crop on the area rented, then the shepherd will pay 500 okes (1410 pounds, or 169 gallons) of milk. The land available has usually been in a crop the year or two before, but is allowed to lie fallow this one year and is thus free for pasturage. Only three or four Valtetsi families have been able to buy their own land down below, but they too bring their flocks back to Valtetsi in the spring.

434 As very little farming can be done on the steep and rocky hillsides
464 around Valtetsi, many of its people, like those from Parthenon, go to the
[321] plains below in June to help harvest the grain. In the late fall and winter,
[465] while pasturing below, some of them help with the gathering of the olives. They are usually paid in kind for such work, an important way of eking out their annual food supply. Other income, of course, is derived from the sale of milk, cheese, wool, and an occasional live animal. Most of the
424 shepherds are in debt to two outside "grocers" (whom they also call
452 "outsiders" or "foreigners"), who advance the equivalent of about $33 to
578 a shepherd against the following season's milk products and agree to the
[609] retirement of the debt at a fixed price per oka of milk or cheese. The price is said to be put so low that the grocer seldom loses, but if there is a rise in price he absorbs all of the profit, further disgruntling the shepherds indebted to him. Some of the conversation went like this:

"We had a bad winter this year. The pastures were not good because it didn't rain. We had to buy fodder to carry our flocks through and thus became heavily indebted to the grocer."

"Yes," added another, "the government shouldn't let these grocers exploit us so."

[474] "But," we asked, "why don't you form a dairy cooperative like some other villages and market your own milk products yourselves?"

[157] "Oh, we could never get together on anything like that," said one, and all the others shook their heads affirmatively. And they then smiled half-ashamedly and yet amused at themselves when a city Greek pointed out to them, "Why are you then blaming the government when you have just admitted that the fault lies in your own individualism and your failure to cooperate?"

233 As a flock passed through the village on its way to be milked after a
533 morning in the fields, I began to ask about the bells, whose assorted sizes made a peculiar and not unpleasing harmony as the animals hurriedly moved homewards. Then the Valtetsi shepherds confirmed what I had been told before — that the selection of bells is one of the tasks the shepherd takes most seriously. He goes to one of the metalworking shops in the market town and picks out a very deep bell with a pleasing tone. This he

1:Sanders Z-5,4 (1952-1959) 1962 EH1 Greece EH1

476 573 branches) from the hillsides to the house. But the most frequently described and the most romantic arrangements are the *nychteria*, or the groups of women who work together in the evening:

> In the nychteria women help each other finish lighter types of work such as carding, the breaking and cleaning of almonds, cornhunking, kneading of ring biscuits, and the like. In these nocturnal pursuits in certain places customs are strict and men are strictly forbidden to participate. Because this type of work is housework and is carried out in the late hours of the day, it usually takes the form of a social gathering. Drinks and roasted chickpeas are offered, jokes are told, games are played, stories and anecdotes are told, and there is singing and dancing.[1]

[562] [574] [595] [593] [372] Once in a while this dancing may last until dawn. In the summertime, especially, the women gather in the village lanes and spin by the light of the moon or a torch of resinous wood.

476 [589] When a woman, whose husband is dead or off in the army, needs help which no kinship group can provide, she will go to the head of some other family and say: "My son has gone into the army. I have only daughters. If you will help me in man's work my daughters will help you." They then become *kollegoi* (colleagues or partners) and carry out the agreed-upon obligations.

These examples are not intended to cover the wide range of mutual-aid activities, but they serve to highlight their main features. Fishermen have numerous arrangements for helping one another; farmers may rent a field and work it jointly, or even own olive or nut trees in common. In general, these mutual-aid arrangements are viewed as quite different from landlord-tenant contracts which occurred in many forms before the land redistribution in the 1920s. Those tied together in mutual-aid agreements think of themselves as coequal and not as superior and subordinate partners. Nor do these mutual-aid traditions ordinarily apply to cases where money alone is given as full payment for services received. Instead, they make it possible for villagers to meet many of their important needs without having to pay money for services rendered. The mutual-aid practices discussed here differ also from what might be called philanthropy or deeds done for "the good of the soul" which will be looked at more closely in connection with the villager's religion.

[226] [241] [422]

[157] Beyond any question, there is a strong strain of cooperation even among the individualistic Greeks. Although somewhat overidealized, the following comment by T. K. Papaspyropoulos about his Peloponnesian village portrays the essence of mutual aid there:

> When somebody gets sick everybody goes to visit him and look after him. When a young girl gets married all the village goes and helps. When they sow, plow, winnow, or do any other village tasks one person helps the other.

out the mote to which the peasant's eye has become accustomed, and even has to take in consideration the fact that the eye is actually adjusted to the mote, and that its removal would mean at least temporary disruption.

There is another side to the picture with respect to coping. Greeks are tenacious and resourceful in making the best of what they do have. A visitor reports that a gasoline tank that sprang a leak on the road was repaired with *loukoumi*, the sticky Near Eastern candy; she reports having seen two men pushing freight cars along a railroad track, as the engine had been destroyed in the guerilla warfare. This attitude can be harnessed productively, and with benefit for people who derive a sense of enjoyment and achievement from it.

The sanction of the Church in inaugurating any change is essential; and so too, is that of the past, in endorsing practice, as well as a precedent for the introduction of change. It is well to remember that Byzantium and its civilization was part of the Greek past; and to remember that Rome was not. The Romans were barbarians; the manual on child care which urges mothers to suckle their babies like Penelope and the Trojan Hecuba, also urges them to give up the custom of swaddling the child's limbs, a barbarous and tyrannical custom practised by the ancient Romans. The past is mentioned in learned articles, in newspapers, in letters, in the oratorical conversation. It is part of the festive dressing of the naked statement.

The areas of vulnerability of the Greek *philotimo* must be remembered in all suggestions of change, as well as the pattern of relationships within which dependency is good and taken for granted. Greeks are ready to be treated as sons or nephews or younger brothers, within the balanced system of interdependency, and the United States Economic Cooperation Administration (ECA), which has been giving welcome aid to Greece, just now is often spoken of as Uncle Truman, after the President of the United States; but it would be an insult to treat them as poor relations who are dependent through personal failure. Again, to be treated mechanistically, impersonally, is offensive; there is resentment at the fact that some of the foreign experts stay at hotels catering to foreigners, associate only with Greeks who follow foreign ways, and treat the rest of the people like figures on a chart.

It is necessary to bear in mind that the Greeks have a deep attachment to their way of life, however much in need of change it may be in terms of more recent scientific and economic developments. There are reports that in the provinces people who can afford to pipe water to their houses will not do so because they do not want to deprive their women of the social visit at the fountain, and of the walk back and forth. There are communities that decide not to have electricity, not to build a hotel to accomodate the tourists who are attracted by the beauty of the place, so that they can retain the ways they like, time-consuming as they are.